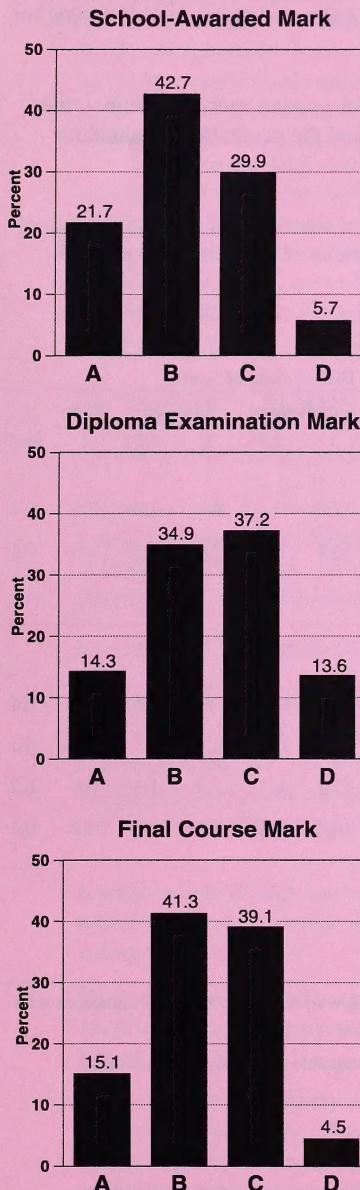


# English 30

## Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for June 1997



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1997 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been provided to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined November, January, June, and August results is made available annually.

### Description of the Examination

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

### Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 12 163 students who wrote the June 1997 examination.

- 95.5% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 15.1% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Students who achieved the standard of excellence (80% or higher, or A) on the diploma examination demonstrated impressive competence in their writing. Students who achieved the acceptable standard (50% to 64%, or C) showed often that they were able to use language well, but did not always sustain this ability.

### Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 68.5%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 64.4%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 66.8%.

## **Part A: Written Response**

*Part A: Written Response* is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **3 Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *English 30 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examination Program* for the 1996–97 school year, which is available in all schools.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels. In June 1997, the average raw score for Part A was 32.4 out of 50.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

### **Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores**

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark(%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent		Proficient		Satisfactory		Limited		Poor	
5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	Ins*			
<b>Minor Assignment</b> The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature, and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Thought and Detail	7.5	4.1	4.2	19.4	16.1	32.6	11.9	8.4	1.8	1.1	0.4
	Writing Skills	7.5	4.0	3.8	20.6	16.4	36.8	8.6	7.0	1.3	1.0	0.4
<b>Major Assignment</b> The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied in class by discussing theme and the literary techniques that the author uses to support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	Thought and Detail	12.5	6.1	4.2	16.4	12.1	28.8	14.3	13.7	2.5	1.5	0.4
	Organization	7.5	5.0	4.3	17.3	14.6	35.5	12.4	8.7	1.2	0.7	0.4
	Matters of Choice	7.5	5.9	4.4	18.7	14.0	37.2	9.7	7.7	1.3	0.9	0.4
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	7.0	5.2	20.0	15.4	30.4	10.0	8.5	1.8	1.2	0.4

\***Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off-topic.

**Note:** The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

## **Examiners' Comments**

### **Reader's Response to Literature Assignment**

This assignment is intended to focus the student as a reader on his or her own response to a text and a theme that are provided. The June 1997 Reader's Response to Literature Assignment required students to use their response to the poem "Tamer and Hawk" as a means of exploring the concept of ruling passions.

This assignment required the students to discuss what the poem "Tamer and Hawk" conveyed to them about the nature and effect of ruling passions. This wording ("nature and effect") was intended to prompt or open up the student reader's awareness of the possible avenues of discussion in the poem and the topic, and did not require deliberately stated attention to, or listing of, both the nature and effect of ruling passions. The wording in the preamble, citing the use of a "falconry metaphor," and the two footnotes appeared to be effective in inviting students to go further in their responses than they usually do in this assignment.

The poem and the topic appeared to be accessible to students. Student responses were often thoughtful. They responded to the task in a variety of ways; e.g., explicating the ideas in the poem stanza by stanza, focusing on one aspect of the poem, referring to personal experience. For the most part, the personal voice of the student was conveyed by means of passing judgement on ruling passions. For example, some students declared that ruling passions are desirable. Others judged them undesirable. Others explored both positions. Very few students presented anecdotal responses.

"Ruling passions" appeared to be a phrase that not all students were familiar with or that some perhaps considered redundant. Whatever the reason, although most students interpreted ruling passion as a driving force or overwhelming passion, others interpreted it as the need to control or subdue oneself or others.

Students achieving scores of **4 Proficient** and **5 Excellent** were perceptive and focused in their personal response to the poem. Many of these students recognized the paradoxical nature of the relationship described in the poem. Those students achieving **3 Satisfactory** often suggested that ruling passions are dangerous, as proven by the paradox or ambiguity of the final stanza.

### **Literature Composition Assignment**

Students were required to develop and support a thesis based on appropriate literature "regarding ruling passion." As in the Reader's Response to Literature Assignment, the topic was variously interpreted. Most students considered "ruling passion" as an overwhelming desire, emotion, or motivation. Others considered "ruling passion" as an impulse to rule or control. Others considered "ruling passion" as the overcoming of one's own impulses or emotions.

A wide variety of text was used, including "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" as an example of life without any ruling passion and *Othello* and *The Great Gatsby* as illustrations of the destructiveness of ruling passions.

Students who achieved overall scores of **4 Proficient** and **5 Excellent** usually presented carefully thought-out discussions of the nature and effect of passion, often recognizing that life without passion would be bleak indeed.

Many students effectively developed their theses by comparing characters who responded to ruling passion in very different ways. Students at this level showed confidence in their use of language as well as in their ability to interpret the literature insightfully. Their discussions were effectively structured, and their supporting evidence was carefully chosen and appropriate. Students who achieved overall scores of **3 Satisfactory** had no difficulty in selecting literature that applied to the topic. They were able to organize their ideas and supporting evidence well.

Correct usage and mechanics continue to be problematic for many students.

## Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	A	67.9
2	D	39.1
3	D	38.3
4	B	58.3
5	A	70.0
6	D	68.0
7	A	71.6
8	D	41.7
9	B	68.2
10	C	62.8
11	C	68.2
12	A	81.5
13	A	75.9
14	D	49.9
15	A	78.5
16	D	55.4
17	B	79.0
18	A	86.6
19	D	79.7
20	B	77.2
21	D	82.3
22	B	56.0
23	D	54.8
24	B	35.3
25	A	62.4
26	B	85.6
27	C	90.1
28	D	61.7
29	C	67.7
30	B	58.1
31	A	41.8
32	C	78.8
33	D	66.8
34	A	55.8
35	C	80.7
36	C	63.5
37	A	54.1
38	C	60.5
39	B	72.8
40	B	48.8
41	A	72.4
42	C	52.5
43	C	48.4
44	A	81.1
45	D	71.5
46	D	68.9
47	B	56.5
48	C	46.2
49	D	53.4
50	A	69.5
51	C	76.9
52	B	56.9
53	B	68.1
54	D	62.2
55	B	54.5
56	A	52.4
57	C	72.5
58	-	-
59	C	74.2
60	C	63.8
61	A	61.3
62	C	66.5
63	B	69.0
64	D	68.1
65	D	73.1
66	B	51.8
67	B	77.7
68	C	69.4
69	A	43.9
70	C	35.6

\*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

## Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

### Examination Blueprint

*Part B: Reading* has a value of 70 marks,\* one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1997 according to these classifications.

Classification by Thinking Skills				
Classification by Course Content	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	Total
Meanings	22, 55	1, 3, 10, 18, 20, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 42, 44, 52, 54, 57, 58,* 59, 60, 64, 69	2, 16, 23, 37, 53, 70	30 Items (22%)
Critical Response	12, 43, 46	5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 31, 33, 35, 47, 49, 50	4, 8, 17, 21, 36, 45, 48, 51	25 Items (18%)
Human Experience and Values		19, 25, 26, 27, 61, 66, 68	24, 38, 39, 56, 62, 63, 65, 67	15 Items (10%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 Items (4%)</b>	<b>43 Items (30%)</b>	<b>22 Items (16%)</b>	<b>70 Items* (50%)</b>

\*Question 58 was dropped from the examination before mark calculations were made. The total mark possible, therefore, was 69.

### Subtest Results\*\*

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 44.1 out of 69

#### Course Content

- Meanings: 17.7 out of 29
- Critical Response: 16.4 out of 25
- Human Experience and Values: 10.1 out of 15

\*\* Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results, because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

### ***Examiners' Comments***

The results of Part B: Reading indicate that English 30 students are proficient in close reading.

Most students are able to successfully infer the meaning even from texts that teachers say are complex and subtle.

The first reading selection, “Metaphors of the World, Unite!” was selected to interest as well as challenge students. Details familiar to students such as “Wile E Coyote,” “the greenhouse effect,” “TV channel changer,” and “blindingly accelerating change” should engage students and facilitate their understanding of the writer’s purpose and meaning.

The essayist poses a question that students can relate to: How should this age be described? He also presents the complexity of the age while mocking attempts to classify, categorize, or label it, thereby inviting a thoughtful consideration of the characteristics of the era and the possibilities in the future.

The essayist’s sophisticated style employs contrast, paradox, allusion, and an ironic tone, challenging good readers to go beyond the obvious idea that this is a complex time that is difficult to describe. They are invited to examine this complexity and also to consider the power of language to shape and define our thoughts, give meaning to our experiences, and provide guidance for the future.

Difficulty in this group of ten questions ranged from 38.3% (percentage of students answering correctly) to 71.6%.

The table below provides information about 6 questions from “Metaphors of the World, Unite!” For each question, statistics are given for three student groups.

***Percentage of Students Correctly Answering  
Selected Multiple-Choice Questions***

	Question Number					
	1	2	3	5	6	10
All Students	67.9	39.1	38.3	70.0	68.0	62.8
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	91.9	60.0	67.0	92.5	80.6	90.6
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	59.0	31.6	28.9	62.3	64.8	51.6

1. The use of the phrase “elegant game” (line 3) in the context of the opening paragraph serves to reinforce the notion of

- A. superficiality
- B. advantage
- C. change
- D. risk

**Question 1** is the opening question of a set based on Lance Morrow’s essay “Metaphors of the World, Unite!” The question was intended to assist students in discovering the main idea of this sophisticated passage. That 67.9% of all students (59.0% of students achieving the acceptable standard on the whole examination) answered correctly indicates that the reading skills of the majority of students enable them to effectively use context clues to draw conclusions. In this instance, details in the introductory paragraph such as “intellectuals,” and “quick fox of meaning” suggest that attempting to affix a simple label to a complex era can be an exercise in superficiality.

That 91.9% of students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination answered this question correctly demonstrates that the ability to derive meaning from context is a well-established skill for this group.

2. The author’s tone in stating that Francis Fukuyama had “resolved the matter peacefully” (line 17) is **most clearly** reflected in

- A. “He published an article proclaiming the ‘end of history’ ” (lines 17–18)
- B. “the worldwide triumph of Western liberal democracy” (line 18)
- C. “the posthistoric age” (line 19)
- D. “the human pageant terminates in a fuzz of meaningless well-being” (lines 19–20)

**Question 2** proved to be difficult—students must be experienced readers in order to “hear” the author’s tone in a piece of writing. Students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (60.0% answered this question correctly) demonstrated a greater facility with this reading skill than did students who received the acceptable standard (31.6% answered the question correctly).

This question is classified as Evaluation, meaning that all of the alternatives contain some measure of correctness, in this case, words that convey tone. A skilled reader can appreciate the contrast established in vocabulary choice such as “flare and darken,” “catastrophes,” “post- and pre-apocalyptic” with “peacefully” in the stem and “fuzz of meaningless well-being” in the alternatives.

3. The term “spectacular narcissism” (line 21) means

- A. blind optimism
- B. dazzling brilliance
- C. inspiring idealism
- D. excessive self-absorption

**Question 3** Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 67.0% answered correctly. Of those students who scored between 50% and 64% on the whole examination, 28.9% answered correctly. Among the student group who failed the whole examination, the correct alternative was the *least* popular choice. This group had some sense of the meaning of “spectacular” but obviously not of the meaning of “narcissism.” That more than twice as many A level students chose the correct answer demonstrates how a well-developed vocabulary enables these top students to think and to construct meaning.

5. The quotations from Dickens and Emerson (lines 29 to 35) serve to

- A. reinforce the complexity of the issue
- B. emphasize the significance of the past
- C. illustrate that most definitions are metaphors
- D. reinforce the violence and brutality of the present

6. The quotation that manipulates word patterns in order to emphasize the paradox of our era is

- A. "the best of times, the worst of times" (lines 29–30)
- B. "a time of angels and moping dogs" (line 31)
- C. "a 'tessellated pavement without cement'" (line 37)
- D. "an age of brilliant incoherence . . . an age of incoherent stupidity" (lines 42–43)

10. The "dangerous loss" that the author concludes is the result of "blindly accelerating change" (lines 74 to 77) refers to our being

- A. lacking in literary appreciation
- B. totally dependent on technology
- C. deprived of meaningfulness and identity
- D. unable to recognize the presence of evil

**Question 5** A very respectable 70% of all students answered correctly. To answer this question, students needed to read carefully (to understand the quotations), to make connections (recognize the similarity between quotations and the writer's main idea) and then to draw a conclusion (this is a complex issue).

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination 92.5% answered correctly. Of those who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination 62.3% answered correctly.

**Question 6** That 68.0% of all students answered this question correctly is impressive. Most students were able to differentiate between paradoxical phrases and the author's thesis (that we live in a paradoxical era).

The 80.6% of students achieving the standard of excellence on the whole examination, who correctly answered this question demonstrated that they were able to go beyond knowledge of the technical term "paradox" to an understanding of its use in relationship to the main idea of the article.

**Question 10** Success in this question required a combination of several skills: close reading, gathering meaning from context, sensitivity to figurative language, appreciation of specific diction, and the ability to see relationships, draw conclusions and make predictions.

62.8% of all students responded correctly. Of those students achieving the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 90.6% answered this question correctly. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 51.6% answered this question correctly. The almost 40% difference between the two achievement groups is a reflection of the challenging demands of the question as well as of the passage.



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### ***Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B***

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 30 Diploma Examination be considered as separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	<b>Part A</b>	<b>Part B</b>
<b>A</b>	16.6	15.7
<b>B</b>	28.6	34.7
<b>C</b>	38.3	29.3
<b>F</b>	16.2	20.2

As the discussions on pages 6 and 7 of this report, have noted, student success on Part B: Readings is directly related to success on the examination as a whole (Parts A and B.)

As the above table shows, this close relationship is dramatically apparent at the standard of excellence. It is also apparent in the groups that failed Parts A and B.

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